

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application courteously is solicited. By this Response, independent claims 34-37 have been canceled. Independent claims 38 and 39 remain pending without amendment thereto.

With respect to the September 19, 2006 Office Action, the Action begins with an acknowledgement of Applicants' election of claims 38 and 39. The Office Action withdrew claims 34-37 from further consideration. Hence, those claims are canceled hereby. Claims 34-37 will be presented in a further divisional application.

Claims 38 and 39 were rejected as purportedly obvious over U. S. Patent No. 6,270,569 to Shibata et al. in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,962,915 to Young et al. This rejection is traversed.

The rejection of claims 38 and 39 is overcome by reliance upon Applicants' claim for priority. In particular, Applicants rely upon their priority case P1998-102546 which was filed in Japan on April 14, 1998. The April 14, 1998 filing date predates the effective date of Shibata et al. as a reference, which is no earlier than June 5, 1998. If the Examiner so requires, Applicants will provide an English translation of priority application P1998-102546. In the meantime, the rejection of claims 38 and 39 over the alleged combination of Shibata et al. and Young et al. is traversed by reason of disqualifying Shibata et al. as a reference against the present claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and Remarks, it courteously is urged that all of the remaining claims are allowable. Hence, allowance of this application courteously is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP



Michael A. Makuch – Registration No. 32,263
1850 M Street, NW – Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
Tel : 202 263 4300
Fax : 202 263 4329

Date : December 18, 2006